

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Murehison River Snails.**—The R.A.O.U. camp held at the mouth of the Murehison River in 1948 has stimulated three articles in the *W.A. Naturalist* since the original report appeared in *The Emu*, vol. 48, 1949, p. 212, so, in an endeavour to make the published results of the survey even more complete, I place on record the following observations:

Two species of land molluses were collected near the camp site. These were identified by Mr. L. Glauert as *Bothriembryon costulatus* (type locality, Sharks Bay) and *B. minor* (type locality, Dirk Hartog Island).

Dead shells of *Bothriembryon* were in evidence at Red Bluff, four miles to the south of the river, and a number of live shells were found by uprooting small shrubs and searching among the roots. These were identified as *B. costulatus*.

—ERIC H. SEDGWICK, Leonora.

**Introduced Land Snails at Esperance.**—Further to the various reports on this topic (*W.A. Naturalist*, vol. 2, pp. 38, 119 and 167), I have the following additional information.

*Helix pisana*, though occurring plentifully in the Esperance area to a distance of over a mile inland from the sea, is totally absent from the islands of the Recherche Archipelago. On the mainland it occurs in conjunction with a local species of *Bothriembryon*. It will be interesting to witness the effects of competition between the two species.

Also found at Esperance was the Dune Snail, *Cochlicella acuta*. This was found only in one garden, that of Mr. E. Paton. The species had the same habit as in *Helix pisana* of clustering on the top of fence posts or sticks. Several thousand individuals were present. At the time (February 28, 1951) the conditions were fairly humid with some showers and many of the snails were active. However, Mr. Paton informed me that they were not a very serious pest as far as gardening was concerned.

—V. N. SERVENTY, Subiaco.

**Young Butcher-bird with Giant Moth.**—At Point Peron on January 27, 1951, the behaviour of a young Grey Butcher-bird (*Cracticus torquatus*) in its endeavour to dismember a giant moth came under the notice of Mr. Eric Schmidt and myself. We did not know if the huge insect had been brought to the young bird by one of its parents, both of which were about, or if it had made the capture itself. Our interest centred in the method by which it was attempting to pull it to pieces.

It was attacking the problem on a sloping platform of tangled branches at the edge of the scrub, and the procedure was to wedge the insect in a fork or other suitable place, and then pull at the

wings in an effort to tear them off. Time after time while we watched, the moth was dragged from the hold without the desired result, when it was immediately taken up and wedged in some other place. Once it slipped and began to fall, but the quick-footed bird went after it and caught it in its bill. Only a small measure of success was achieved when, alarmed by an increasing number of spectators, the bird suddenly took up its booty and flew off.

A young Magpie would have held the insect down in its foot while pulling it to pieces. The procedure followed by this young Butcher-bird appeared to be in line with the larder-stocking habit inherent in its kind.

—W. H. LOARING, Bickley.

**Pallid Cuckoo Report, 1950.**—Many voluntary observers have co-operated during 1950 in the survey of first calling dates of the Pallid Cuckoo.\* The first date quoted for each locality during 1950 was as follows:—

April	July
10—South Perth	3—West Pongelly
12—Mogumber	6—Cookernup
16—South Bunbury (?)	9—Pintharuka
22—Tenindewa (seen only)	9—Wagerup (Harvey)
23—Bunbury	10—Harvey
25—Bejoording (?)	11—Bayswater
26—Wilray (seen only).	12—Nedlands
May	16—Bunbury (other observer)
13—Thomsons Brook (Donnybrook)	17—Buckingham (Collie)
15—Malda Vale (seen only)	18—Dunsborough
25—Mount Kokeby	22—Redmond
28—South Coogee	27—Pinjarra
June	August
6—Wickepin (seen only)	4—Shotts (Collie)
17—Malda Vale	6—East Guildford
24—Donnybrook	
26—Bassendean	

It will be noticed that several early records are either uncertain, or based on sighting only. The very early dates quoted for South Perth and Mogumber are very interesting—there was an inrush of tropical maritime (*Tm*) air on April 10, and this might perhaps partly explain the early call of the bird, because of the greatly increased humidity brought by this type of air. On the other hand, there was an outstanding inrush of *Tm* air on May 9 and 10, and yet the only call record in that period dates from May 13, at Thomsons Brook near Donnybrook.

It might be desirable to observe all instances of Pallid Cuckoo calls during 1951, and not the first calls only, in order to find out whether any weather situation has any effect on the bird.

—J. GENTILLI, Nedlands.

\*The 1949 report appeared in the *W.A. Naturalist*, vol. 2, 1950, p. 59.

**Blue-breasted Wrens at Mosman Park.**—In the *W.A. Naturalist*, vol. 2, 1950, p. 108, Mr. W. H. Loaring has presented some interesting data on the extending of the recorded range of the Blue-breasted Wren (*Malurus pulcherrimus*). By 1950 its presence had been established from the mouth of the Murchison River to as far south as Scarborough.